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GERMANY AND FRANCE.

THE Federal Parliament of Northern Germany has just been elected by universal suffrage, and its deliberations will be watched with jealousy and anxiety by the Prussian House of Deputies, which represents a more competent constituency. Count BISMARCK, like Mr. DISRAELI, has thought it prudent to dig below the supposed foundations of the Liberal party; and it is not yet certain whether either legislator has penetrated into depths of political indifference which would allow the exercise of aristocratic influence. Even with the most conciliatory disposition on both parts it will be difficult for two nearly co-ordinate Assemblies to exist side by side, although their mandates and their functions may be nominally distinct. The Northern Confederacy is almost as essentially Prussian as the kingdom itself; and it is scarcely possible that the distribution of interests and parties should not be substantially the same in the Prussian House and in the Federal Parliament. The dispute between the Crown and the Liberal Opposition has never approximated to a solution, although it has been suspended through external causes. Immediately after the triumphs of the war, no patriotic politician would have wished to revive dissension, especially when the efficiency of the army had proved the practical expediency of the King's military reforms. During the Session of this year the discussion of the new Federal Constitution would have been long and animated if foreign complications had not once more superseded domestic differences of opinion; but the Emperor NAPOLEON relieved Count BISMARCK from the embarrassment of meeting the numerous objections which were urged against the scheme of Confederation. M. ROCHER had, by his statement in the Legislative Body that Germany was now divided into three, provoked the most stinging of repartees in the publication of the secret treaties between Prussia and the South German States. It consequently became necessary to reassure French opinion by devising a set-off against the recent aggrandizement of Prussia, and at the very moment when the constitutional controversy was at its height the purchase of the Duchy of Luxemburg from the King of HOLLAND was ostentatiously announced. It might easily have been foreseen that all parties in the House of Deputies would immediately recognise the necessity of completing the Confederation on the terms proposed by the Government. The opposition was immediately withdrawn, and Count BISMARCK himself for once profited by the strength which a Government derives from the support of an independent Assembly. The protest of the Liberal leaders against the alienation of German territory furnished the Government with a plausible reason for refusing concessions so evidently condemned by national opinion. The enthusiasm for German unity and independence might perhaps evaporate, if it were not subjected to the pressure of French interference.

The difficulties which might have attended the convocation of the Federal Parliament have been similarly anticipated. The smaller States, in the North as in the South, are probably irritated by the establishment of Prussian supremacy, although they may on the whole acquiesce in the indispensable condition of national safety. A judicious enemy would have watched the growth of internal jealousies with a careful avoidance of alarming demonstration or of menace; but the Emperor NAPOLEON, with all his sagacity, is restless and impatient; or perhaps he thinks it more important to amuse his own subjects than to foster dissension in Germany. Without the shadow of necessity he thought fit to visit the Emperor of AUSTRIA, for the ostensible purpose of holding consultations which might have been as conveniently managed by professional diplomatists at Paris and Vienna. The unauthorized and semi-official rumours which followed the interview of the Sovereigns might all be reduced to the statement that a contingent alliance against Prussia had been

concluded between France and Austria. The conventional allegation that the two EMPERORS were bent on preserving the peace of Europe was not intended to be accepted as true; for it was announced at the same time that France and Austria were determined to insist on the observance of the Treaty of Prague. As it could not be supposed that either Power was prepared to go to war on behalf of Denmark, it followed that Prussia was to be restrained by force from the formation of a closer union with Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and Baden. There is every reason to hope that the reports of the Salzburg arrangement were untrue, although they may have been sanctioned by the highest authority. It is incredible that a ruler of experience and ability should endanger his throne by insuring the risk of failure in a war which could scarcely result in any advantage to France. The time has passed for the possible annexation of a German village to any foreign State. Half a dozen unsuccessful campaigns would be insufficient to break the strength of Germany, and war would only strengthen the consciousness of national integrity. The Austrian Government, although it has reasons for hostility against Prussia, is still more unlikely than France to enter voluntarily into a suicidal alliance. Even in the time of the Seven Years' War general opinion denounced the league of MARIA THERESA with LOUIS XV. against FREDERICK the GREAT; and in the course of a century German patriotism has been created or revived. It is not improbable that, by joining France in an attack upon Prussia, the Austrian Government might sacrifice the German duchies which formed the original nucleus of the Empire.

Among the numerous interpretations of the Emperor NAPOLEON's recent speeches, the theory that he means what he says is not the least plausible. It happens to be perfectly true that the Empire has on the whole been prosperous and popular, and that consequently, notwithstanding some untoward occurrences in America and in Europe, there is no sufficient reason for tempting fortune by engaging in gratuitous adventures. The local dignities who emulate Byzantine rhetoric in the awkward adulation of their addresses to the EMPEROR would willingly hint, through the mist of inflated eulogies, that they are too happy and too loyal to wish for an increase of taxes, or for an additional levy of conscripts. Ready to deify CÆSAR, whether he celebrates Exhibition games or military triumphs, they greatly prefer, although they scarcely venture to express their opinions, the victories or repose of peace to the glories of war. It is said that the reforms in the system of conscription which were adopted ten or twelve years ago have at the same time increased the efficiency of the army, and favoured the growth of peaceable inclinations in the population. The acceptance of a pecuniary composition in the place of personal substitutes has increased the proportion of veterans to conscripts, and the middle-classes have ceased to furnish any considerable contingent to the ranks of the army. Old soldiers, as might be expected, grumble at the change, but Mayors and commercial Consuls share the popular feeling; and the EMPEROR has perhaps satisfied himself that the conquest of a Rhenish province is no longer an object of general aspiration. His Liberal opponents sarcastically remark that his warlike speech at Auxerre was followed by peace, and that conversely his pacific assurances at Lille, Arras, and Amiens may probably portend war; but politics are regulated, not by symmetry or antithesis, but by prevailing interests and passions. The more recent publication of M. DE MOUSTIER's circular may perhaps strengthen the impression which the EMPEROR's personal declarations have imperfectly succeeded in producing, though it is unfortunate that all similar assurances are habitually received with an apparently unconquerable distrust. The same motives which restrained the French Government from interfering in the quarrel between Prussia and Austria tend still more steadily against a wanton disturbance of the peace. The philosopher in PLUTARCH suggested to PYRRHUS, who

proposed to enjoy himself at home as soon as he had conquered the world, that he could rest as easily before the enterprise as after its accomplishment. Even if the Emperor NAPOLEON had emulated the German victories of his uncle, he could not expect to enhance the devotion to his person and dynasty which has been lately professed in French Flanders and Picardy.

A declaration of war against Prussia would at once extend the North German Confederation from the Main to the Danube and the Alps; and it is improbable that the union, once formed, would be dissolved by the results of the war. The reasons against a turbulent policy are indeed almost too conclusive, for it is difficult to conjecture the EMPEROR's reasons for diffusing general alarm if he entertained no design against the peace of Europe. It is possible that he may have wished to test the dispositions of South Germany, and especially of the princes; and his visit to Salzburg may have produced a salutary disappointment. With the exception of the Duke of HESSE DARMSTADT, who rashly risked his tottering coronet by paying homage to a foreign protector, the German Sovereigns carefully abstained from gratifying the wishes of the unwelcome visitor. One of many Austrian Archdukes attended the head of his family at Salzburg, and old King LUDWIG alone sustained the hospitality of the Royal family of Bavaria. It was perhaps more surprising and vexatious that the democratic journalists of Southern Germany could not be tempted, even by their dislike of Prussia, into complimentary language to the Emperor of the FRENCH. Baron BEUST, according to probable accounts, confined himself to general professions of friendship, and declined to enter into binding engagements; but, even if an Austrian alliance has been arranged, France has found no partisans in independent Germany. The Emperor NAPOLEON has, on more than one occasion, exhibited a singular indifference to the effect of political alarms on commercial and monetary affairs. The mass of his constituents and adherents care little for the price of stocks, and they have always been laudably jealous of the honour of France. It is impossible that the EMPEROR can have been ignorant of the repugnance to war which was felt by the upper and middle classes during the uncertainty of the Luxemburg dispute. If the freeholders of the Departments had entertained an opposite feeling, the public opinion of Paris might perhaps have been disregarded; but throughout the Eastern and Northern districts not a voice has been raised in advocacy of war. The Germans in the meantime have not tempted aggression by displaying either fear or pugnacity.

WHIGGERY AND THE REFORM BANQUET.

AFTER the manner of the English, the various Leagues and Unions and Committees are going to celebrate the passing of the Reform Bill by what is called a *fête* and banquet, at the Crystal Palace, on the 30th of September. There is a little rivalry in the matter; for, as the honours of the new Revolution are claimed equally by Radicals and Tories, there are to be two dinners—one under the auspices of Mr. BRIGHT's friends, and one getting up by Mr. DISRAELI's supporters. The Radicals, however, are first in the field, and perhaps with good right. To understand the exact significance of this celebration we must recur to its originators. The proposal emanated from the London Working Men's Association, and Mr. GEORGE POTTER is the Chairman of the Banquet Committee, to which are affiliated for the occasion the Reform League—i.e. Mr. BEALES's Camarilla—the Reform Union, and the provincial Leagues. Mr. BEALES and Mr. BAXTER LANGLEY, and their colleagues, only appear in the humble form of invited guests. What is meant, then, is to show that the triumph belongs to the artisan and *ouvrier* class; and as Mr. POTTER is at the head of the Trades' Unions, it is significant that he and his friends, not the middle-class Reformers, claim the place of dignity, and the personal honours of what they regard as the triumph of democracy. Mr. POTTER and his Committee have invited several notables to the Banquet; but, besides the well-worn metropolitan members, they do not seem to have been very successful in their endeavours to get the greater folks to go down to Sydenham to enjoy the veal pies and heavy drinks for which the unappetizing *menu* of the Crystal Palace is famous. Mr. STUART MILL approves of the celebration, but does not say that he means to assist at it; Mr. BRIGHT promises his co-operation, but does not go so far as to undertake to risk his digestion on it. But Earl RUSSELL is much more plainspoken. In every sense of the word, he has no stomach for such gormandizing and speech-making; and perhaps he

not unreasonably declines to play second fiddle to Mr. GEORGE POTTER. Mr. GLADSTONE seems to be hesitating, and pondering, and doubting, and sends an answer of the most extraordinary vagueness. His attendance is subject to negotiations, and when an invited guest requires explanations and the exchange of diplomatic notes about a dinner, it is pretty clear that his appetite is not very keen, nor his host and company very attractive.

We must do Mr. GEORGE POTTER the justice to say that he has come out in a new character, and successfully too. In inviting Earl RUSSELL to the Crystal Palace banquet he has perpetrated a joke which would be perfect did it not touch upon the *mauvaise plaisanterie*. It was clearly too broad and palpable and practical for Earl RUSSELL, and therefore he can scarcely conceal his resentment. Old and pure Whiggery has been so long starched and formal that it could hardly be expected that Earl RUSSELL would quite appreciate the chuckle and dig in the ribs which Mr. GEORGE POTTER has administered to him. The working-man is all very well, and for a good many years his emancipation has been a most useful political topic to the Whigs; but the working-man emancipated, master of the situation, and asking you to dinner, is quite another sort of thing. It is with the Whigs as with a good many Northerners in the United States. The nigger was a useful whip to flog the South with, but the nigger sitting in the same church and railway car with the superfine Fifth Avenue man is to the Boston aristocracy much what Mr. GEORGE POTTER's card must have been to Pembroke Lodge. If it is in flesh and blood, as Mr. GLADSTONE perhaps admits, to eat and drink with Samaritans and Publicans, it is not in the blue-blood Pharisees of politics to be so polite. Earl RUSSELL might of course have got off by one of the usual white lies. He really is going to Ireland on the 30th of September, and here he might have left the matter; or, driven to a last shift, he might have said that he was going to Iceland, or the Andes, neither journey being half so distasteful as the trip to Sydenham. But he does not condescend to avail himself of a polite subterfuge. He plainly, and with all the outspoken bluntness of disappointment and vexation, says that he is not in a fit state of mind to be an enthusiastic companion for the Crystal Palace revellers. He does not feel that he is at all likely to be a jolly good fellow between ODGERS and LUCHART. And he has the candour to say so. A more prudent and less honest man than Earl RUSSELL would have concealed his *pique*; but, with feminine or senescent garrulity, not only is he, as the ladies say, "hurt," but he does not mind showing his temper. Everybody can understand the good Earl's frame of mind. As when—as schoolboys say when they are elaborating a simile—a kitten has been playing with a mouse, alternately patting and gripping it, and in the pure serene delight of power amusing itself with alternate snapping and shipping, and all of a sudden a great ugly cat in an instant gobbles up the mouse, even so Lord RUSSELL must feel when BEALES and POTTER have taken out of his mouth the bread which for so many years he has been mumbling. And then for BEALES and POTTER, as they are chewing the dainty morsel, and smacking their lips over it, to ask Lord RUSSELL to say that he feels it to be sweet and toothsome! The veteran Reformer of 1832 has had a good many humiliations, as when Lord PALMERSTON tripped him up, but a bitter cup is not necessarily a dirty cup. An aristocratic stomach may be pardoned for being squeamish when it comes to being boon companion with ODGERS. Even WILKES had a genteel horror of Wilkesites.

So thoroughly does Earl RUSSELL seem to have been astonished by the hail-fellow-well-met geniality of the Crystal Palace dinner-givers, that he forgets, not only his politeness, but his logical consistency. He is altogether inarticulate in his letter to Mr. GEORGE POTTER. What he had to say, if he must say it, was—"I don't approve of your banquet or your company; I have my doubts about the cause you are celebrating; so you must excuse me for declining your obliging invitation." If he had stopped here, his character as a polite letter-writer might perhaps have been sacrificed, but nothing more. As it is, Earl RUSSELL shows that he is hardly master of connected thought. "Other measures unconnected with 'Reform of Parliament appear to me to be necessary to 'assure the future of this country.'" This may be quite true, but what has it all to do with the Reform *fête*? National Education, Church-rates, and the Irish question are very important matters, but Mr. POTTER did not want Earl RUSSELL's opinion on them. He asked him to dinner in order to celebrate the passing of the Reform Bill, not to extract his opinion on things in general. Very likely the Reform League may think that on these and such like matters Earl RUSSELL's judgment or Earl RUSSELL's co-operation is now

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very unimportant. The Whigs, being dished, are no longer a party for the men of action and the future to ask advice of, or rely upon. Not only did this reference suggest the ludicrous image of a burst bladder offering to tow a man-of-war into port, but the enumeration of the political points most pressing was singularly unlucky. Education and Church-rates and Ireland have been mumbled over and talked about and about in every Session for the last five-and-twenty years; and during most of that time Earl Russell has been in office. Thrice he has been Premier, and Education and Church-rates and Ireland are just where they were. Whatever influence he has had Earl Russell has used, as regards these subjects, either to put them off to a more convenient season, or to propose what he knew to be impossible remedies. He goes on to assume that on these three subjects Earl Derby's Government will use all its influence to resist remedial measures. In saying this perhaps Lord Russell thought that he was, by anticipation, tripping up the present Ministry. If so, he said a very foolish thing. It is quite as likely as not that what Earl Derby has done with Reform he will do with Education, Church-rates, and Ireland. Consistency would impel him to this line. No doubt next Session we shall hear that it has always been one of the esoteric doctrines of the great Conservative party that secular—or, as it used to be called, godless—education is the only possible alternative; and that in his heart of hearts—if such an organ is to be found in Mr. Disraeli—the leader of the House always felt that the Irish, or perhaps even the English, Establishment was a mistake, and that a redistribution of Irish estates was a duty. It is all but certain that on these and the like little matters Mr. Henley will find out that he is not, as he elegantly expresses it, going to be humbugged any longer, and that on a good many more subjects than Parliamentary Reform we shall find out that the Tory's function is to march at the head of the democracy. Shakespeare is said to have been ready to lose the world for a quibble; Earl Russell never had much dignity, but he can never forego the small luxury of a snarl.

Mr. Gladstone is oracular, vague, and unintelligible in his reply to Mr. Potter. He quite feels that the occasion ought to be celebrated, and he goes so far in the art of politeness as to say, in his usual stilted and pompous way, that this very indigestible dinner "will create an enhanced sense of the duty which the extension of the franchise imposes." Mr. Gladstone has got into such a thorough habit of using great swelling words that his very jokes are tumid. After this lumbering facetiousness, he proceeds to say in what particulars he thinks the Reform Act deficient; it would have been more important had he told Mr. Potter whether he accepts the future policy of the League. Because it must not be forgotten that Beales and Potter do not consider their work by any means accomplished. They still aim at, and intend to agitate for, Manhood Suffrage and the Ballot. Perhaps Mr. Gladstone, in the suppressed portions of his letter, offered some considerations on these and the like matters which Mr. Potter finds it convenient to keep to himself. At least, for Mr. Gladstone's sake, we hope so; for, as the matter stands, his implied identification with Potter, and Potter's plans, seems to be complete.

AMERICA.

THE President of the UNITED STATES may be described, according to the temper of his critics, as a resolute or as an obstinate man. With his constitutional powers limited and hampered in every direction by the hostile legislation of Congress, he employs himself in steadily counteracting the popular policy by the exercise of any remaining prerogative which may have been tolerated or overlooked. Having been forbidden to dismiss his Ministers without the approval of the Senate, he discovered that he could suspend Mr. Stanton from office, and he was fortunate enough to cover the dismissal of his hostile subordinate by General Grant's popularity. Congress, in the short summer Session, had extended the powers of the commanders in the Southern districts over every branch of administration; but the majority forgot, or perhaps deliberately neglected, to make their tenure of office permanent. The President has accordingly dismissed General Sheridan and General Sickles, prudently replacing them by well-known Republican officers. He can scarcely be blamed for insisting on rights which formed but a fraction of the great authority of his predecessors, and he is not sufficiently susceptible of new impressions to share the contempt of the dominant party for the Constitution which was formerly idolized; yet the feelings of astonishment and

irritation which are provoked by his conduct are evidently genuine, and the firmness which foreigners are tempted to appreciate may possibly, after all, prove to be ineffective obstinacy. Practical expediency is the ultimate test of political wisdom, and there is no merit in relying on forms which have finally ceased to embody facts. A constitutional statesman is bound to be suspicious of innovations, but he ought not to protest merely for the sake of being told, like Orator Hunt in Westminster Hall, to "protest, and go about his business." If the supreme power in the United States has dissociated itself from the Constitution, the President wastes his energies, like Julian the Apostate, in attempting to resuscitate obsolete orthodoxy. The most significant argument which is used by his opponents consists in the absence of all argument, involving the assumption that the struggle is decided. The question whether permanent freedom is compatible with exemption from constitutional restrictions may interest historical inquirers, but it has not yet attracted the attention of American politicians. Except among a discontented minority, it is taken for granted that public opinion or the will of the people ought to control legislation and government. There can be no doubt that the responses of the oracle at present condemn the contumacy of the President, for the moderate Republican party which formerly defended his policy now eagerly repudiates its own principles and organization. The controversy provoked by the suspension of Mr. Stanton turns exclusively on the comparative estimation in which the President and the ex-Secretary for War are respectively held by the people. When Mr. Lincoln removed Mr. Cameron from the same department, it was universally understood that the President, whatever might be the character of the Secretary, was exercising an undisputed right.

It is not certain whether the Southern victims of arbitrary legislation approve of Mr. Johnson's pertinacious efforts to vindicate the relics of their liberties. Some among them are only anxious that the measures of reconstruction should be enforced, in the reasonable fear that Congress might avenge the failure of its own scheme by projects of confiscation; another and a larger section of Southern citizens abstain from all interference with a policy of which they thoroughly disapprove; and lastly, there is in nearly all parts of the ex-Confederacy a faction which courts Northern patronage and local power by an alliance with the conquerors and with their negro clients. In two or three of the Border States there is a more respectable Union party consisting of the farmers in upland districts which were always unsuitable to slave labour. The bitterest hostility has long existed between the mountaineers and their neighbours in the plains, and it sometimes happens that two adjacent counties hate each other as bitterly as if they were cities in ancient Greece. During the war the Unionists were persecuted, or they were compelled to suppress their predilections; and they are naturally disposed to profit by the turn of fortune. Their whole number is, however, insignificant, even when it is reinforced by individual dissentients from the favourite doctrines of the South. In the Gulf States the white allies of the North and of the negroes are to be found only among the least reputable classes. It is an abuse of language to describe the coloured Republicans as a political party, although their votes and their physical strength may make them formidable. In rural districts white employers may perhaps sometimes retain a legitimate influence over their former slaves; but emissaries from Northern associations are busy in canvassing and organizing the negroes, and there can be little doubt that political gratitude and trust in lavish promises will, in the great majority of cases, prevail over personal respect and attachment. The registration, as far as it has proceeded, is ridiculous in its results, although it may be satisfactory to the Republican party. The negroes are generally in a majority, and they will therefore control States in which the superior race perhaps outnumbers them by two to one. If they have the prudence to send white representatives to Congress, they may enjoy their usurped power for a limited time. The appearance of negro legislators at Washington would probably accelerate the inevitable reaction.

It is possible that the next President may redress the balance of power which has been deranged by the legislation of Congress. General Grant, who, notwithstanding the abuse which he has earned by taking the place of Mr. Stanton, seems likely to be the popular candidate, has carefully abstained from expressing political opinions, and perhaps he may be indifferent to party controversies. He is distrusted by the extreme Republicans, although they have not yet ventured to relinquish the advantage which their cause may derive from the General's personal popularity. A President who,